

May 8, 2019

Field Biosecurity Guidelines for State/County/City Personnel Entering Shell Egg Packing Facilities, Poultry Harvest Facilities, and Poultry Farms

To: All California State/County/City Personnel

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is continuing to find positive cases of virulent Newcastle Disease (vND) in backyard and now several commercial poultry flocks. This disease is caused by a highly contagious virus that is lethal to poultry and normally foreign to the United States. While devastating to poultry, vND is not considered a human health threat. The heaviest areas of infection are in Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The disease was also detected in Northern California – specifically one chicken brought to a veterinary clinic in San Mateo County in March 2019. Until this disease is eradicated, all areas in California, particularly Southern California, are at risk.

CDFA is working with federal and local partners as well as poultry owners to respond to the findings. All infected and exposed flocks must be euthanized by the state to stop the spread. Disease response also includes surveillance for disease, poultry isolation, decontamination and often a quarantine order to cease movement of poultry, equipment, and products on or off a property without a permit from the State Veterinarian.

We request your assistance and cooperation in preventing the spread of this devastating poultry disease by following some important biosecurity precautions. These precautions will reduce the risk of introducing and spreading vND. State, county, city, and private inspectors, auditors and service providers should adhere to the following:

- 1) If possible, *suspend* all on-farm poultry area visits, if doing so does not present an eminent public health threat. If possible, replace on-site inspections with remote, record-based audits. Commercial poultry producers have been asked to minimize personnel entering live production areas. **This request will be re-evaluated by July 1, 2019.**

If in-person inspections or visits to poultry farms must occur:

- 1) Do not enter farms where eggs are hatched or poultry are raised if you have birds or live poultry at home.
- 2) Never visit any poultry farm within 72 hours after visiting another commercial poultry farm, egg or meat processor; after duck hunting or having had other exposure to wild migratory waterfowl; or



visiting any backyard, school, feed store, swap meet, live bird market, pet store, fair, veterinary clinic, zoo, bird hunt club, or other facility which has live poultry or birds.

- 3) Always wash your vehicle before entering a farm/egg processing facility. A commercial car wash can be used for this purpose. Park your vehicle in a designated area per the company's biosecurity plan or if there is none, try to park on cement or a paved area away from the production houses. Keep the inside of the vehicle clean and free of any organic material.
- 4) Use good personal hygiene measures including freshly laundered clothes and showering before visiting a poultry farm or processing facility. Clothing that has been worn to premises with birds or live poultry should *never* be worn to another farm or processing facility without being laundered between visits.
- 5) Never enter a poultry farm unless trained to apply and remove (don and doff) biosecurity clothing without spreading disease. If entering live bird areas, use clean, dedicated rubber boots or disposable plastic shoe covers, disposable coveralls, and a hair net. Use disposable gloves and a mask as directed by the company being inspected.
- 6) ALWAYS follow all the biosecurity instructions of the commercial poultry farm/egg processing facility including, but not limited to: registering in a logbook, answering queries about bird and poultry premises visited previously, disinfecting shoes or changing into dedicated footwear, and cleaning and disinfecting of vehicle wheel wells if they must enter a premises.

TO REPEAT THE MOST IMPORTANT POLICY: Always comply with the personnel entry and disinfection procedures required by poultry company policies. These procedures may include signing in and out, use of tire/truck wash stations, company supplied protective clothing and footwear, footbaths, hand cleaning stations, and other biosecurity measures.

Remember, people, equipment, and vehicles can easily spread dangerous diseases from one location to another. Personnel who spread the disease can be held liable. CDFA appreciates your efforts to protect poultry health in California on a daily basis. Please do your part to protect the poultry industry, California's agricultural businesses, and our Nation's food supply.

For more information and updates on vND, please visit: www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/VND

Sincerely,



Annette Jones, D.V.M.
Director and State Veterinarian